



Decision Memo

Dillon Trail Reconstruction Projects (Arctic Placer, Broken Wheel, Groovi Uvi, Miners Creek)

USDA Forest Service
White River National Forest
Dillon Ranger District
Summit County, Colorado

Township 5S, Range 78W, Section 15
Township 6S, Range 77W, Section 9

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Project Background

The Dillon Ranger District, White River National Forest (WRNF) requested public comments on a proposal to improve the connectivity and sustainability of the following trails: Arctic Placer, Broken Wheel, Groovi Uvi, and Miner's Creek. The project includes reconstructing existing trails, building new trail connections to add to the National Forest System (NFS) trail network, and trail decommissioning. The project is located on NFS lands administered by the Dillon Ranger District in Summit County, Colorado.

Purpose and Need

The purpose of the proposed project is to improve the connectivity and sustainability of the Dillon Ranger District trail system.

Decision

Based on review of public comments and conducting an interdisciplinary analysis, it is my decision to approve:

1. Arctic Placer Trail #9105- open to hike and horse.

- a. The trail will be realigned in order to make it a more sustainable grade. Modern trail design standards will be incorporated including sustainable grades, grade reversals, and out sloping of the tread. The trail tread will be constructed at 18-24-inch width using hand crews and/or motorized equipment.
- b. Close and restore 0.6 miles of the old trail using various restoration techniques.

2. Broken Wheel Trail #9145- open to hike, horse, and mountain bike.

- a. The trail will be realigned in order to make it a more sustainable grade. Modern trail design standards will be incorporated including sustainable grades, grade reversals, and out sloping of the tread. The trail tread will be constructed at 18-24-inch width using hand crews and/or motorized equipment.
- b. Close and restore 0.6 miles of the old trail using various restoration techniques

3. Groovi Uvi Trail #9086- open to hike, horse, and mountain bike.

- a. A segment of the Groovi Uvi trail will be realigned to remove it from a wet, boggy area to a drier location in the lodgepole pine forest. The old trail will be closed and restored.
- b. Extend the Uvi Groovi trail by adding a 1.0-mile segment of an existing social trail that will be reconstructed before adding to the National Forest System.
- c. Decommission trail #316W.1B (1.1 miles) which was identified in the WRNF TMP to be decommissioned..

4. Miner's Creek Trail #38- open to hike, horse, and mountain bike.

- a. Realign three segments of the Miner's Creek between the junction with Miner's Creek Road and tree line.
- b. Close and restore the old trail segments using various restoration techniques.

My decision also includes comprehensive project design criteria that will be required in order to minimize resource impacts (see Table 1, below).

The project area has been reviewed by USDA Forest Service (Forest Service) specialists for impacts to relevant resources, including cultural, recreation, water, fisheries, botany, and wildlife. There were no issues identified that could not be avoided or mitigated, and all practical means have been employed to avoid and/or minimize environmental impact. The analysis for this project is documented in the project file, which is maintained by the Dillon Ranger District. The Project Design Criteria are outlined in the following table.

Table 1: Project Design Criteria

Pre-Construction
New and existing noxious weed species will be treated in accordance with the latest White River National Forest Weed Management Plan.
During Construction
Trees with active nests and snags providing cavity nesting habitat should be retained when practicable.
Construction of trails and any infrastructure will follow the NFS 2309.18 Trail Design Handbook.
Maintain topsoil from reroute trail to use for rehabilitation of closed trails.
The National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) requires that if newly discovered cultural resources are identified during project implementation, work in that area must stop and the responsible agency's Authorized Office be notified immediately (36 CFR 800.13). The Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA), requires that if an inadvertent discovery of Native American Remains or Objects occurs, activity must cease in the area of discovery, a reasonable effort made to protect the item(s) discovered, and immediate notice be made to the Authorized Officer, as well as the appropriate Native American group(s) (IV.C.2). Notice may be followed by a 30-day delay (NAGPRA Section 3(d)). Further actions also require compliance under the provisions of NHPA and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act.
Post Construction
All disturbed ground will be re-vegetated with native plant species. Utilize seed mix approved by the Forest Botanist and certified to be free of weed species. Seed mixes that incorporate native plant species like those within the Project Area are desirable. Any mulch used in re-vegetation efforts must be certified to be free of weed species.
Post construction disturbance will be monitored for invasive plants and treatment(s) will be consistent with USFS policy and guidelines.

Reasons for Categorically Excluding the Decision

I have concluded that this action can be categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is a routine activity within an approved category of exclusion under 36 CFR 220.6(e)(1): *Construction and reconstruction of trails*.

I find no extraordinary circumstances related to this decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative environmental effect. The following resource conditions were

considered as part of this analysis. Findings for each of the seven extraordinary circumstances 36 CFR 220.6(b) are as follows:

- (i) ***Federally listed threatened or endangered species or designated critical habitat, species proposed for Federal listing or proposed critical habitat, or Forest Service sensitive species*** – The Endangered Species Act requires that federal actions not jeopardize the continued existence of any species federally listed or proposed as threatened or endangered, or result in adverse modification to such species' designated critical habitat.

There are no critical habitats in the project area. The project will have no effect on any federally listed threatened or endangered species. The proposed action would have no direct or indirect effect or impact to Canada lynx, wolverine or their habitat.

Forest Service Region 2 Sensitive wildlife species that may occur within the project area include American marten, Pygmy shrew, Hoary bat, Boreal owl, Flammulated owl, Northern goshawk, Olive-sided flycatcher, Western bumblebee, or Monarch butterflies. The project will have no long-term negative impact to any of these species.

- (ii) ***Flood plains, wetlands, or municipal watersheds*** – The project is designed to maintain and improve stream and riparian health by eliminating open water crossing and moving trails out of the water influence zone (WIZ). Stream habitat would be maintained or improved by the implementation of this project. Disturbance to floodplain areas, streambanks, and riparian vegetation will be minimized to the greatest extent possible.
- (iii) ***Congressionally designated areas, such as wilderness, wilderness study areas, or national recreation areas*** – The decision does not include trails in any of these areas.
- (iv) ***Inventoried roadless area or potential wilderness area*** – This decision will not affect any Inventoried Roadless or potential wilderness areas.
- (v) ***Research Natural Areas*** – There are no candidate or designated Research Natural Areas near the project area; therefore this decision will not affect candidate or designated Research Natural Areas.
- (vi) ***American Indians and Alaska Native religious or cultural sites*** – This decision will not adversely affect American Indian or Alaska Native religious cultural sites as no sites are located within the project area.
- (vii) ***Archaeological sites, or historic properties or areas*** -This decision is compliant with the National Historic Preservation Act. A cultural resource survey was completed, and a report was submitted to the Colorado State Historic Office with a determination of *No Adverse Effects to Historic Properties* for the trail realignment project. A Cultural Resource Inventory Report is on file at the White River National Forest Supervisor's Office.

Public Involvement

This project was first listed in the Schedule of Proposed Actions on October 1, 2018. The scoping notice was published on the WRNF website. The WRNF did not receive any comments in response to the scoping notice through both email and the online comment database.

Findings Required by Other Laws

This decision is consistent with the White River National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) as required by the National Forest Management Act. The proposed action conforms to the Forest Plan. Standards and guidelines will be applied as appropriate to meet Forest Plan goals, objectives, and desired conditions.

This decision is compliant with the Endangered Species Act. Fish, Botany, and Wildlife biological surveys were conducted. There will be no impact to threatened, endangered, proposed, or Region 2 Sensitive plant or fish species. The project will have “no direct or indirect effect or impact” to Canada lynx. Implementation of the proposed action would not determinately impact water quality, macroinvertebrates, plants, or any federally listed fish or wildlife of Forest Service sensitive species.

This decision is made in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (1969), the National Forest Management Act (1976), and all other applicable laws and regulations.

Administrative Review or Appeal Opportunities

The approved activities within this decision are not subject to appeal in accordance with the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, Pub. L. No. 113-76, 128 Stat. 5 (2014). Section 431 of the Act directs that the 1993 and 2012 legislation establishing the 36 CFR 215 (post-decisional appeals) ... “shall not apply to any project or activity implementing a land and resource management plan...that is categorically excluded...under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).”

This decision is not subject to appeal or objection. Implementation may occur in accordance with the project design criteria.

Implementation Date

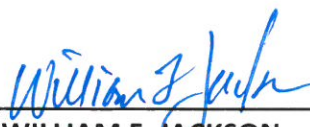
This project may begin implementation immediately.

Contact Person


For additional information concerning this decision, contact Cindy Ebbert, Wilderness & Trails Manager, Dillon Ranger District, Post Office Box 620, Silverthorne, Colorado 80498, at (970) 262-3458, or cynthia.ebbert@usda.gov

Signature and Date

I have concluded that this decision is categorically excluded from documentation in an environmental impact statement or environmental assessment as it is within one of the categories identified in 36 CFR 220.6 (e), and there are no extraordinary circumstances related to the decision that may result in a significant individual or cumulative effect on the quality of the human environment. My conclusion is based on information presented in this document and the entirety of the planning record.



WILLIAM F. JACKSON
District Ranger



DATE

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